<div align="center">**In the name of Allah (SWT)**</div>

Some Methodological Considerations for studying the "history" in Early Shīʿī *Ḥadīth*

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Abstract

Regarding to impressive increase of Ḥadīth studies in recent decades, now investigating the historical events as an important part of ignored content, which is cited in Shiite narrations, should be interesting for Shiites, historians, and Hadith scholars alike, because it can open up new horizons in their studies and researches. Since these studies are in their early stages, the methodological considerations should lead to a better and more appropriate review process and organizing.

In an intra-Shiite perspective and with the aim of identifying the domain, capacity, importance and value of Shiite historical narrations and in response to the current academic needs, this article _as an idea_ tries to pay attention to the following eight methodological considerations in this regard:

1. Prioritizing the question of being on the question of how; it means the necessity of engaging in descriptive surveys and descriptive analysis before engaging in interpretive analysis and explanatory analysis or Textual Criticism and the like.

2. Defining the approach of examining the historical contents of narrations as "content" of narrations or "representation" of history in Shiite narrations.

3. Time domain of historical events in Shiite narrations.

4. Diversity of historical issues in Shiite narrations.

5. Physical and metaphysical dimensions of the reflection of historical events in Shiite narrations.
6. Goals of dealing with historical events in Shiite narrations.
7. Considering the historical propositions of the Shiite narrations as an important part of Shiite historiography.
8. The necessity of using new research methods and techniques of social sciences such as content analysis, thematic analysis, comparison technique and the like in discussing the historical propositions of Shiite narrations and also choosing the combined approach for methods in researches and particularly in intensive researches related to historical events in Shiite narrations.

The paper ends with a proposal to set up a comprehensive database for history in Shiite narrations.

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Introduction and statement of the problem

Hadith Studies and research in recent decades and increasing attention to the criteria for distinguishing right from wrong in the early Islamic narrations have partially prevented us from paying attention to their content.

An important part of this forgotten content of narrations is historical issues.

Differences and distinctions between Shiite and Sunni narrations have also led to the emergence of two categories in the field of historical issues with two different approaches among Shiites and Sunnis.

The following two factors have caused a quantitative and qualitative difference between Shiite narrations and Sunni narrations in the field of historical issues and events:

1. The difference in their view of the concept of infallibility
2. The period of the presence of the Infallible, in the sense that this period is not limited to the prophet age as it is for the Sunnis. but for the Shiites it includes the time of the presence of Shi'a imams

This article tries to present the idea of the necessity of examining the historical contents of Shiite narrations and its methodological considerations and finally suggest the idea of setting up a comprehensive database.

I want to emphasize the word an Idea, because I am not look for a scientific article in accordance with the standards of specialized research journals, rather, my goal is to present this view and hear its critiques.

It should also be noted that in this paper, the current needs of the Iranian scientific and academic community, especially from the perspective of those who believe in a religious approach in historical studies, have been considered.

Therefor it can be said that the origin of my idea is a belief in the value of the content of these Ahadith and the possibility of launching a new horizons for historical studies based on the re-reading of these narrations.

This idea should be interesting for Shiites, historians, and Hadith scholars alike, because it can open up new horizons in their studies and researches. Since the historical studies of Ahadith are in their early stages, it seems the methodological considerations should lead to a better and more appropriate review process and organizing.

Subject literature and Background

In this section, contrary to the usual procedure, I want to mention only my own works In order to show that this issue is of interest to me. My direct works in this field contains two articles and a master thesis which I was the supervisor,

- **History of Prophets in the narrations of Imam Baqir (a.s.),** presented in "Islamic Sciences, Ethics and Art in Shi'a World: The Case of Medina", 18 – 19 October 2018,University of Kologne, To Commemorate the 50ᵗʰ anniversary of the establishment or the first Shi'a library in Europe by the late Prof. Abdul – Djavad Falatouri.

- **History in the domain of narrations of Imams; a Methodological Introduction** (تاریخ در سپهر روایات اهل بیت علیهم السلام؛ درآمدی روش‌شناختی، نقش شیعیان در تاریخ‌پژوهی و تمدن، قم: کنگره بین‌المللی نقش شیعه در پیدایش و گسترش علوم اسلامی، به کوشش: جمعی از محققان با نظارت محسن الویری (منشورات کنگره: ۲۱)، ۱۳۹۷ش.، صص ۲۵ ـ ۵۰)

- **The typology of historical issues in the narrations of Imam Sadegh p.b.u.h.** (گونه‌شناسي مباحث تاريخي در روايات امام صادق عليه السلام (پایان‌نامه ارشد)، خانم زهرا السادات حسینی، دانشگاه باقر العلوم علیه السلام، ۲ دی ۱۳۹۷ ش.)

I also have several articles on history in the Qur'an that can be considered as origin and support for historical studies in Ahadith:
- Crossing from text to reality: An introduction to the role of the Qur'an in explaining the Prophet Mohammad's biography
- Comparison of the structure of the text of the Qur'an and historical sources in the report of the selected events of the Prophet Mohammad's era

- Historical view of the Qur'an and the historiography of Muslims; A case study of the reason for the victory of Muslims in the Battle of Badr
- The Laws of history and its features in the Qur'an
- History in another narrative, a preliminary study of history in the Qur'an
- Quran and historical interpretation
- The model of the religious family, a Qur'anic study based on the story of the prophets in Qur'an
- Timeline in Qur'an;A case study of "Ez"(إذ) and "Wa Ez" (و إذ)

- **گذار از متن به واقعیت؛ درآمدی بر جایگاه قرآن در تبیین سیرهٔ نبوی**، همایش ملی قرآن و تاریخ، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی واحد محلات، ۱٦ مهر ۱۳۸۳ش.

- الویری، محسن؛ اخلاقی، محمد حسن، **مقایسهٔ ساختار متن قرآن و منابع تاریخی در گزارش رویدادهای منتخب عصر نبوی**، فصلنامهٔ تاریخ اسلام، سال دهم، شمارهٔ ۳، پاییز ۱۳۸۸، شمارهٔ مسلسل ۳۹، صص ۷ ـ ٤۷.

- **نگاه تاریخی قرآن و تاریخ‌نگاری مسلمانان؛ بررسی موردی علت پیروزی مسلمانان در غزوهٔ بدر**، پژوهش‌نامهٔ علمی ـ پژوهشی تاریخ اسلام، شمارهٔ ۱، پاییز ۱۳۸۹، صص ۱۹ ـ ۳۷.

- میرمحمدی، سیدضیاء الدین؛ الویری، محسن، **قانون‌مندی تاریخ و ویژگیهای آن در قرآن**، فصلنامهٔ علمی ـ پژوهشی تاریخ فرهنگ و تمدن اسلامی، سال دوم، پاییز ۱۳۹۰، شمارهٔ ٤، صص ۹ـ۳٤.

- **تاریخ به روایتی دیگر، بررسی مقدماتی تاریخ در سپهر قرآن**، سایت سخن تاریخ، ۲۱ بهمن ۱۳۹۳،

- **"قرآن و تفسیر تاریخی"**، مجموعه مقالات اندیشه‌ها و نظرها در نظریه و مکتب تفسیر پیشرفت‌شناخت، جلد اول: ساخت نظریه، دانشنامه نخستین کنفرانس قرآن‌پژوهی پیشرفت (۲۰ و ۲۱ اردیبهشت ۱۳۹٦) ، به اهتمام احمد آکوچکیان، تهران: بنیاد اندیشه دینی و مطالعات توسعه، ۱۳۹۷ ش.، صص ۲۵٦ ـ ۲۷۵.

- **الگوی خانواده دینی، یک بررسی قرآنی بر اساس داستان انبیاء**، ارائه شده در دومین دور گفتگوی دینی مرکز گفتگوی ادیان و تمدنهای سازمان فرهنگ و ارتباطات با هیأتی از دانشکده الهیات و فلسفه لوبلیانا از کشور اسلوونی، ۲۳ آذر ۱۳۹٤ / ۱٤ دسامبر ۲۰۱۵م.

The Considrations

The eight methodological considerations based on individual experiences on the content and historical implications of Shiite narration are as follows:

1. **Prioritizing the question of being on the question of how;**

We still do not know the extent of historical information in the narrations. Does it include mythical and prehistoric times? About which of the previous prophets we can find information in these narrations? Moreover, about which tribes and races and nations and peoples? And about which lands? Is there any historical information about the events of the time of any of the Shiite Imams? Are there any historical predictions in these narrations? An initial and integrated report on them is not yet available, so the first question is what information is contained in these narrations.

Accordingly, the research methods of this stage refer to the appropriate methods for collecting and classifying information. It means the necessity of engaging in descriptive surveys and descriptive analysis before engaging in interpretive analysis and explanatory analysis or textual analysis like Grounded Theory or Discourse Analysis or Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and the like, or even Textual Criticism which is suit for studying the accuracy of the text

2. **Defining the approach of examining the historical contents of narrations as "content" of narrations or "representation" of history in Shiite narrations.**

What can be said briefly is that there are three types of representation: The Reflective Representation, which reflects the reality just like a mirror, The Intentional Representation that reflects selected and managed facts, and The Constructive Representation that represents the self-made signs as reality

The Intentional Representation and The Constructive Representation have special epistemological consequences that cannot be accepted, but because of some ambiguities in the Reflective Representation and the research method fits it, there is no acceptable and convincing reason to give up the view of "historical propositions as content". It is similar with the traditional language theory in

Aristotelian logic and the discussion of the words in the principles of jurisprudence.

This subject has very important methodological and even epistemological consequences.

3. Diversity of historical issues in Shiite narrations.

One of the important considerations about historical narratives based on preliminary studies is the diversity of historical themes.
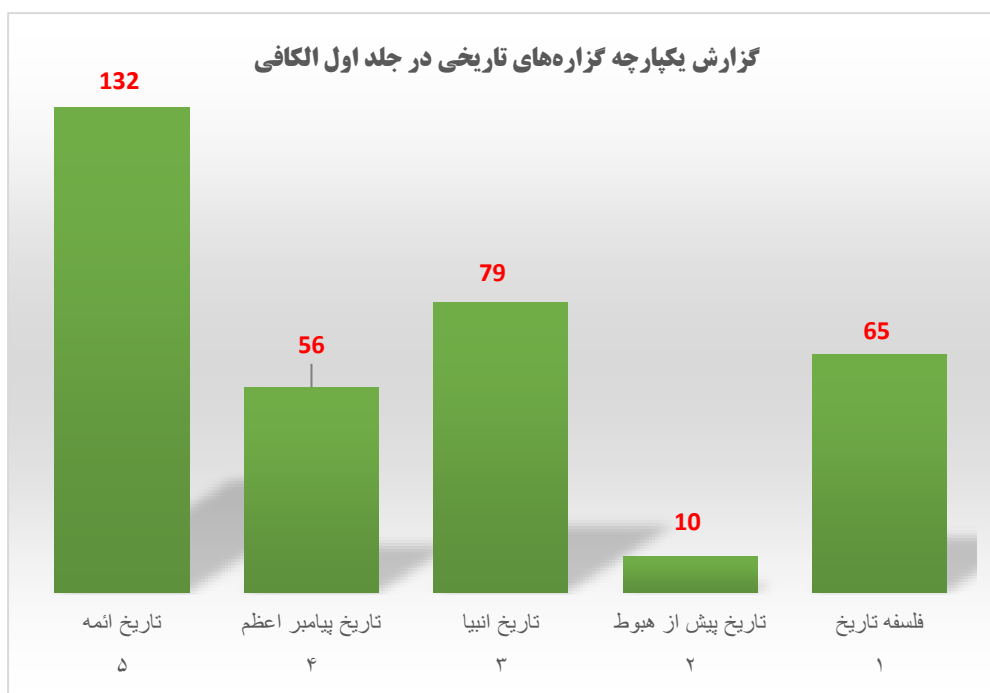
For example, there are significant discussions about the philosophy of history in these narrations, and also we can find a lot of information about

the personal lives of the heroes of history, their family issues, their relationship with the people of their time, the social life of the people, how they invited the people, the reaction of the people to their invitation, and many other such issues.

4. Time domain of historical events in Shiite narrations.

Preliminary studies show that there is a wide range of time in Ahadith and it contains events from prehistoric history and the so-called mythical history (before The descent of Adam) to the history of tomorrow and apocalyptic news.

Between the two, we can find important information about the history of the previous prophets, the previous nations, the history of the Prophet Mohammad, the history of the Imams, the history of governments and statesmen after the death of the Prophet until the establishment of the caliphate.

In this diagram you can see the diversity of historical issues and time doain in Al-Kafi , V 1

گزارش یکپارچه گزاره‌های تاریخی در جلد اول الکافی

	تاریخ ائمه ۵	تاریخ پیامبر اعظم ۴	تاریخ انبیا ۳	تاریخ پیش از هبوط ۲	فلسفه تاریخ ۱
	132	56	79	10	65

The Prophets, who were noteworthy for Imam Baqir (a.s)

The first and the most important point about the historical narrations of Imam Baqir (a.s) is the name of those prophets who were paid attention by Imam Baqir (a.s). In 165 extracted propositions, Imam Baqir (a.s) has mentioned 12 times the prophets without their names, six times in general, 3 times those prophets who are unknown and three times an Ethiopian prophet whose name is unknown. In the remaining 153 propositions, 27 names of the prophets has been mentioned, which is more extent related with Prophet Adam (as) in 26 propositions and then Prophet Abraham (as) in 18 propositions, Moses (as) in 17 propositions and Noah (as) in 13 propositions. The names of Prophet Job, Ezekiel, Khidr, Daniel and Jonah (younus) (as) have been mentioned only once and the names of some Prophets such as Isaac (Ishaq), Ishmael, Shoab (Jethro; Shoaib), Amran (Imran), Aaron (Haroon), Eber (Hud) and Joshua (Yusha) (as) have been mentioned twice. The following diagram shows the abundance of the names of the prophets in the narrations of Imam Baqir (as).
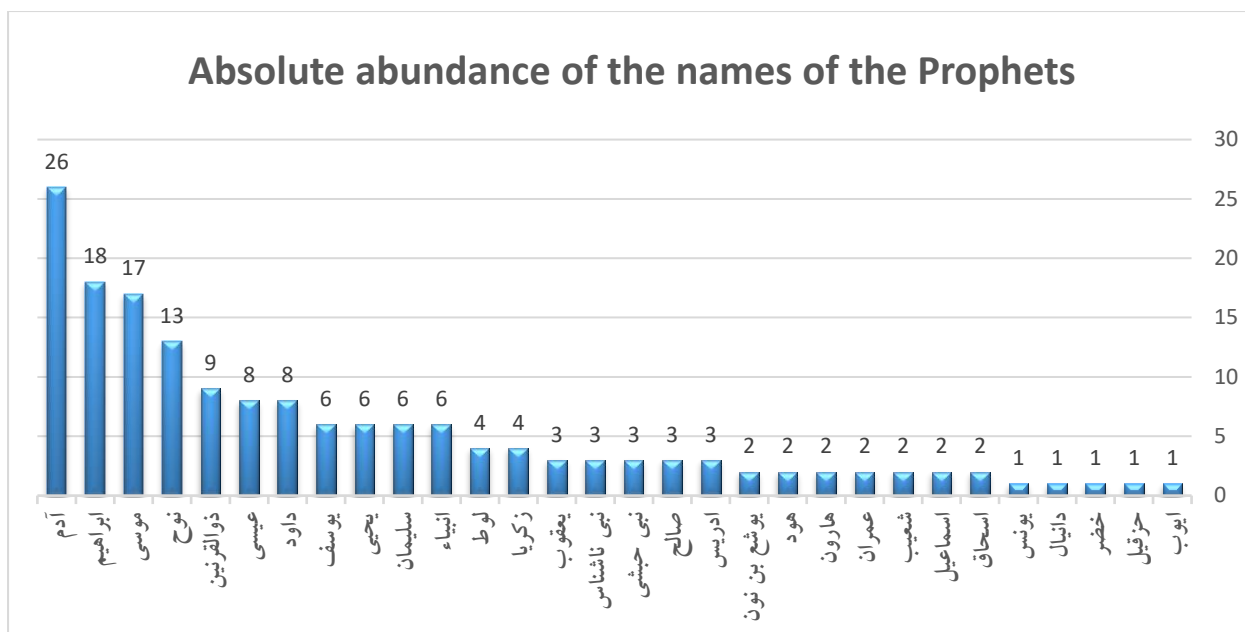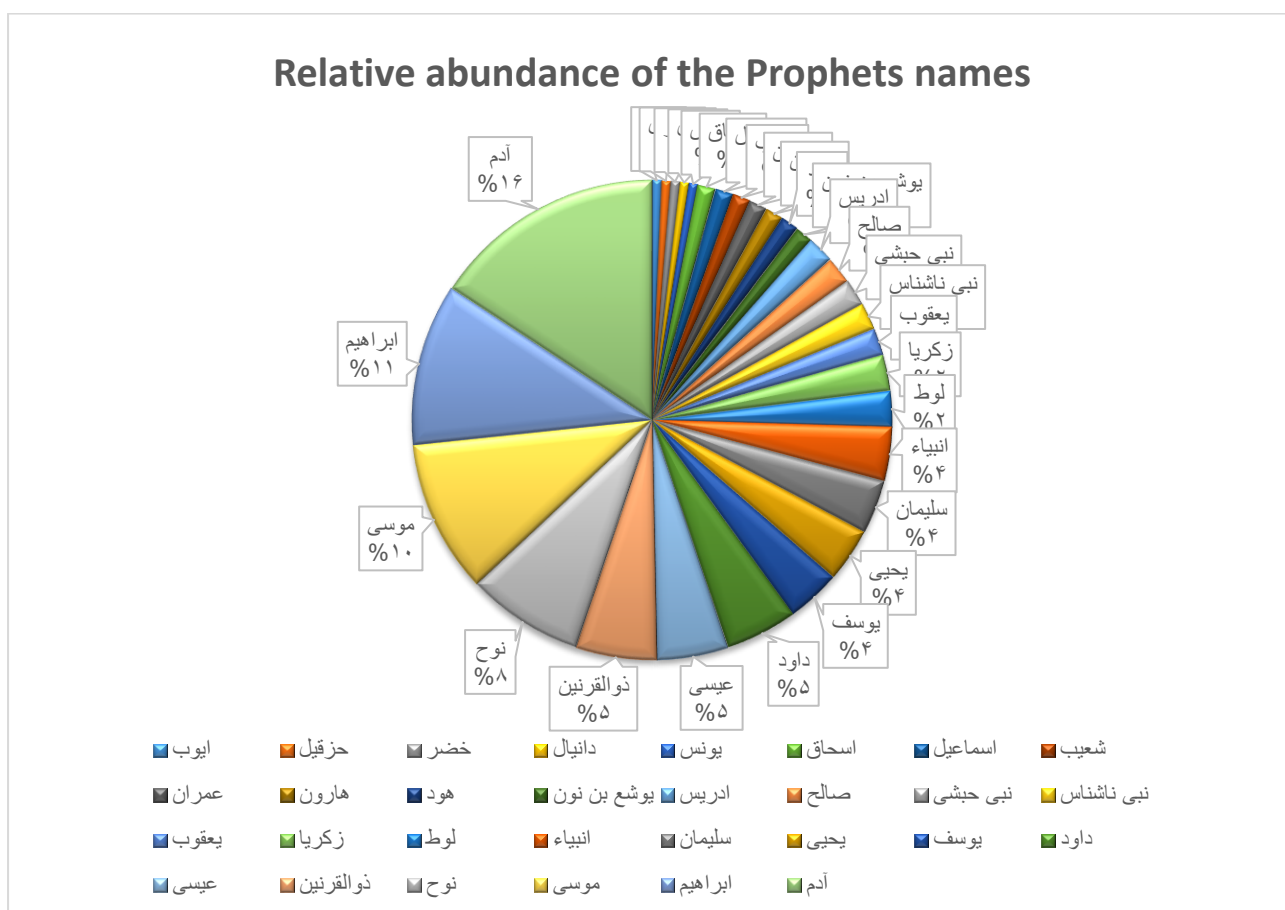
Diagram 1- Absolute abundance of the names of the Prophets

Diagram 2- Relative abundance of the Prophets names in the historical narrations of Imam Baqir (as)

5. Physical and metaphysical dimensions of the reflection of historical events in Shiite narrations.

Another very important point and with important methodological consequences in historical narrations is to pay attention to the metaphysical dimensions of historical events. I don't mean by metaphysic only psychological dimensions, but also about the role of faith, sincerity, trust, and other issues related to how to relate to God on social phenomena.

If we categorize the narrations of Imam Baqir (as) in this regard (Content axes of Imam Baqir's (as) historical narrations), we shall find as follow:

A. Spiritual characteristics   24   29%

B. Personal and family life   33   55%
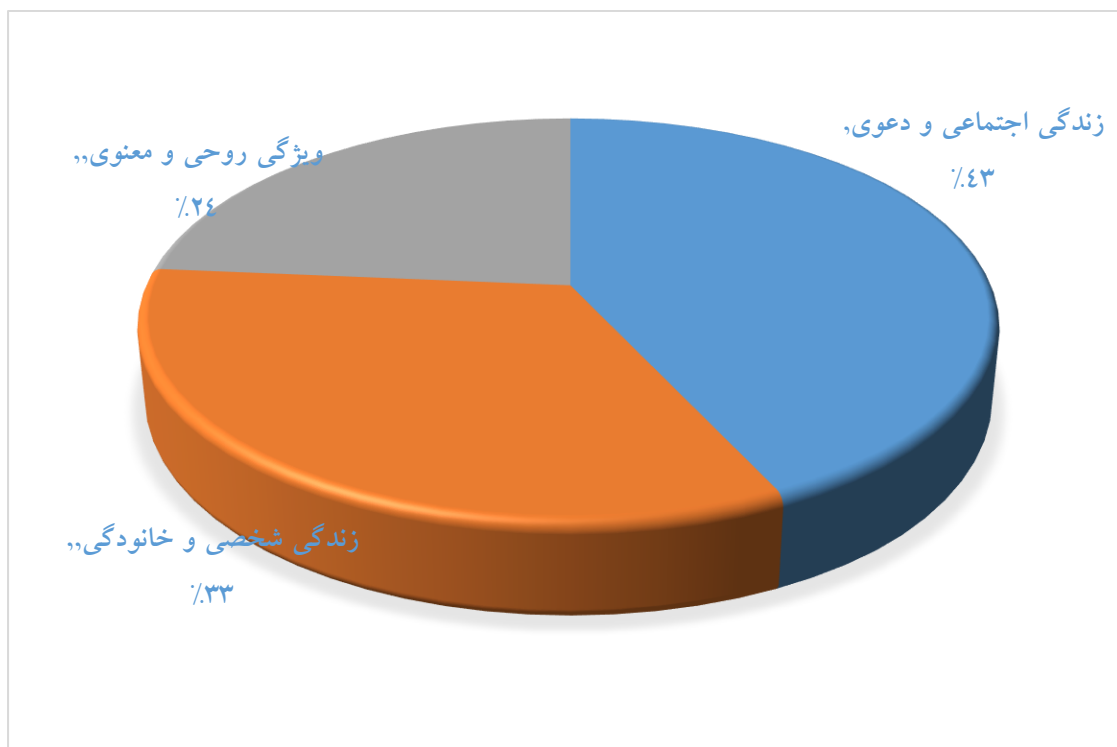
C. Social and performing mission   43   71%

Diagram no- 4: The Content axes of Imam Baqir's (as) historical narrations

This diagram show that Imam Baqir (as) has paid more attention to the social life of the previous prophets and how they deal with the people as well as how they

performed their mission. Individual characteristics of the prophets could not gain much attention of imam Baqir (as).

6. Goals of dealing with historical events in Shiite narrations.

Another important methodological point in understanding the historical themes of narrations is why addressing them.
An initial study of the narrations of Imam Baqir (as) shows that these goals were considered in them.

The scholarly goals of Imam Baqir's attention to the previous Prophets

Generally, the scientific goals of historical narratives of Imam Baqir (as) are related to the history but some of these narrations more clearly refer to the interpretive, theological and ethical discussion.

- Historical Topics   147   % 89
- Ethical Topics   8   % 5
- Theological Topics   6   % 3/5
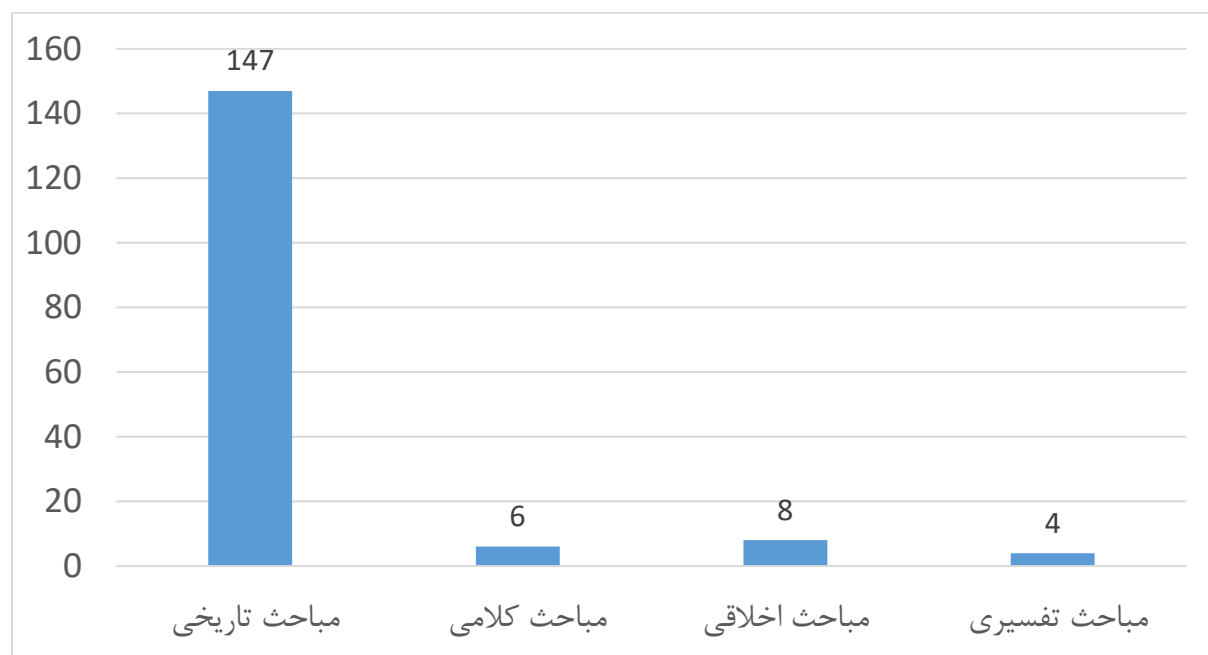- Interpretive Topics   4   % 2/5

Diagram no. 6: The scientific / scholarly goals for attention to the previous Prophets

Social goals of Imam's attention to the previous Prophets

The motive of Imam Baqir (as) paying attention to the historical issues is not clear; but his social goal may be found in thirty propositions of the identified and extracted propositions.

• Unknown Social goals   135
%82

• Answer to the question of the one of companions   23   %14

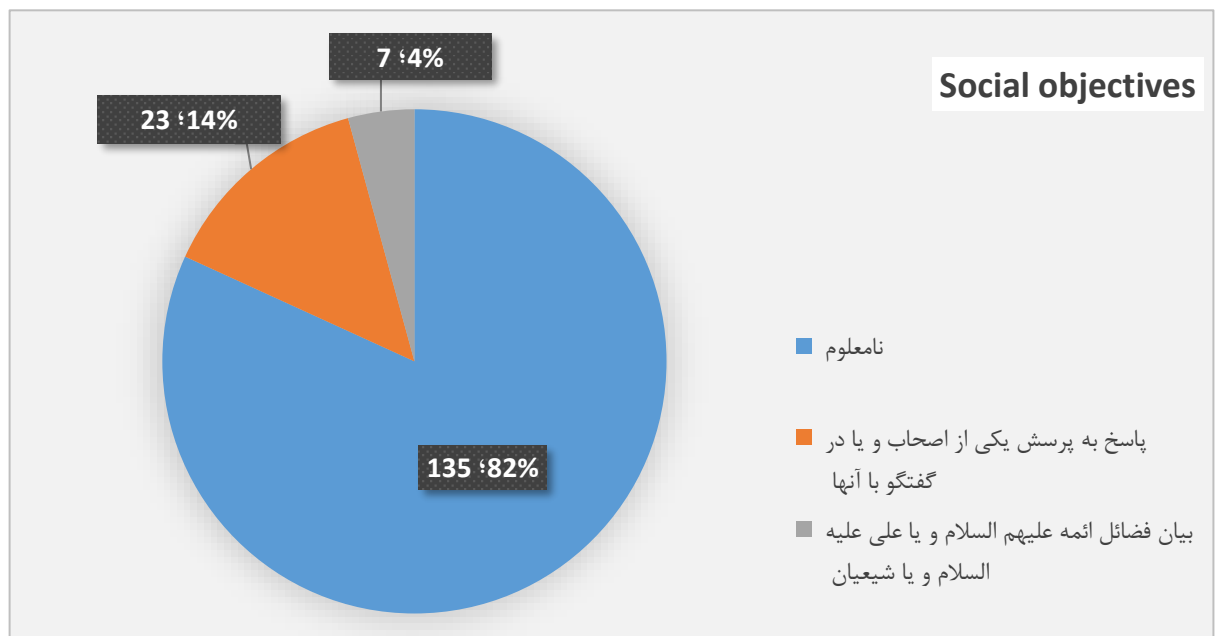• Expression of the virtues of the Imams (as) or Imam Ali (as) or Shiites   7
4%

Diagram no.7: Social objectives attention to the previous prophets

7. Considering the historical propositions of the Shiite narrations as an important part of Shiite historiography.

Imami historiography should be considered as an independent current of historiography in the Islamic world. And due to the position of Shiite Imams, narrations with historical content have a special and important place in this historiography.

It may not be easy to prove the comprehensive influence of historical narrations on Imami historians, but there is no doubt that these narrations have been relatively influential.

For example, the views of the Imams on the caliphate have certainly influenced the views of Shiite historians.

Therefore, historical narrations should be considered either as the starting point of Imami historiography or as a turning point or important point.

8. **The necessity of using new research methods and techniques of social sciences such as content analysis, thematic analysis, comparison technique and the like in discussing the historical propositions of Shiite narrations and also choosing the combined approach for methods in researches and particularly in intensive researches related to historical events in Shiite narrations.**

It is not difficult to find examples of historical propositions in narrative texts, but it may not be easy to find a way to classify them.

A variety of common methods in the social sciences can be used here, but it should be noted that these methods have been formed in the field of social studies and use of them in historical studies requires great Caution and is not without ambiguity and challenge.

We should choose the combined approach with deferent methods in intensive researches related to historical events in Shiite narrations.

Conclusion

Concerning these considerations mentioned above and in case of explaining the deferment aspects of them, and based on the findings, it is possible to prepare for the launch of a comprehensive database of themes and historical content of Shiite narrations and think about setting up this bank.